

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAM-01

ACDA-10 IO-10 /088 W

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R 231607Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 899

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 139

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: BRIAN FAULKNER RAISES SPECTRE OF REPARTITION

REF: BELFAST 137

1. IN INTERVIEW WITH LOCAL NEWSMAN APRIL 22 FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE BRIAN FAULKNER EXPRESSED FEAR THAT REPARTITION NOW BEING WIDELY DISCUSSED AS ALTERNATIVE TO CONTINUATION DIRECT RULE SHOULD ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES NOT RPT NOT REACH AGREEMENT AMONG THEMSELVES. FAULKNER ELIMINATED ALTERNATIVE OF WITHDRAWAL BY BRITISH GOVERNMENT, "NEITHER BRITISH PEOPLE, GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF REPUBLIC NOR WORLD OPINION COULD STAND ASIDE FROM RAMPAGE OF GUNMEN WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY FOLLOW." PERMANENT DIRECT RULE IS "UNPALATABLE TO PEOPLE ACCUSTOMED TO DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT." DIRECT RULE WOULD IN ANY CASE, HE STATED, BE ABHORRENT TO ELECTORATE IN GREAT BRITAIN WHO HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEMS. FAULKNER STATED ALTERNATIVE BEING WIDELY AIRED AT PRESENT TIME IS TO DECIDE IF TWO COMMUNITIES IN ULSTER CANNOT LIVE TOGETHER THEY MUST BE SEPARATED. HE SUGGESTED MAJORITY WOULD BE GIVEN CONTROL OF LARGE PROTESTANT PART NORTHERN IRELAND AND THOSE PARTS WITH LARGE CATHOLIC POPULATION WOULD BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN

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REPUBLIC. FAULKNER EXPRESSED AWARENESS TERRIBLE PROBLEMS ESPECIALLY IN CATHOLIC AREAS BELFAST AND SAID IT WOULD BE

"BETRAYAL OF PROTESTANT POPULATION WEST OF THE BANN." HE PREDICTED IT WOULD BE ONLY A MATTER OF A FEW YEARS BEFORE SUCH A SMALL UNIT WAS ALSO ENGULFED IN REPUBLIC.

2. MOST REACTIONS POLITICAL LEADERS SO FAR TO FAULKNER THESIS IS THAT THIS CLASSIC EXERCISE OF SCARE TACTICS. OFFICIAL AND VANGUARD UNIONISTS REACTED STRONGLY TO TIMING AND SUBSTANCE OF MR. FAULKNER'S CLAIM. REBUTTALS INCLUDED "UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION (UUUC) WILL NOT SEE AREAS OF THE PROVINCE ABANDONED NOR WILL IT PERMIT A FORM OF APARTHEID TO BE CREATED HERE" AND "EIRE MAY WANT NORTHERN IRELAND IN THE LONG TERM. IT CERTAINLY DOES NOT WANT IT IN BITS AND PIECES WITH HARDLINE REPUBLICANS THROWN IN FOR GOOD MEASURE" AND "NO BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN ITS RIGHT SENSES WOULD COUNTENANCE SUCH A PLAN. ANYWAY IT IS THE INTENTION OF THE UUUC TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF THE CONVENTION." ALLIANCE PARTY LEADER OLIVER NAPIER WHO VISITED WESTMINSTER LAST WEEK SAID IN REACTION THAT HE HAD RECENT ASSURANCES FROM SECRETARY OF STATE REES AND OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN NEAVE THAT NEITHER OF THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES WOULD ABANDON THEIR COMMITMENTS "TO ALL PEOPLE NORTHERN IRELAND MERELY IF THE CONVENTION FAILED TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS."

3. UNIONIST PARTY NORTHERN IRELAND HEADED BY FAULKNER NOT RPT NOT RUNNING STRONGLY IN CONVENTION ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND IT POSSIBLE FAULKNER SEIZED ON SHOCK ISSUE. HIS PROMINENCE AND EXPERIENCE HOWEVER MAKE HIS WARNING IMPORTANT AND FURTHER REACTIONS CAN BE EXPECTED. SO FAR NO RPT NO SUGGESTION MADE THAT BRITISH PLANTED IDEA WITH FAULKNER BUT IRISH TIMES ARTICLE APRIL 23 SPECULATED PARTITION AMONG CONTINGENCY PLANS. OFFICIAL DENIAL WILL PROBABLY BE NECESSARY TO COOL ISSUE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, POLICIES, POLITICAL PARTIES, CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, SPECIAL ELECTIONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BELFAS00139
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750143-0253
From: BELFAST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750422/aaaaaudz.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BELFAST 137
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUL 2003 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <02 FEB 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRIAN FAULKNER RAISES SPECTRE OF REPARTITION
TAGS: PINT, UK, UUUC, (FAULKNER, BRIAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006